CHAPTER IX

"THE RETURN OF THE HERO"*

The Second Coalition — Failures and Defeats of the Directory — The Rastadt Congress — Murder of the French Plenipotentiaries — The Crisis in France — The Revolution of Prairial — The Conscription — The Schemes of the Directors — The Successes of the Bonapartists — The Attitude of Paris—"The Return of the Hero " — The Man of Destiny.

THE situation of affairs in Europe at the close of 1799 was, as Bonaparte had anticipated, by no means simple. England having been scorned in the propositions for peace which she made in 1797 at Lille, a second coalition of France's enemies was formed in 1798, largely through the efforts of Paul I, the new Czar of Russia, The organization of the Helvetian Republic in Switzerland had brought the Revolution into the very heart of central Europe, and thus had further estranged the trembling dynasties of both Austria and Prussia. The organization on February eighteenth, 1798, of the Roman Republic had brought the Revolution to the frontiers of Naples; when her king, having joined the coalition, renewed hostilities and inaugurated a general war by throwing an army

1 The fullest accounts are those of Sorel and Vandal. Further authorities are the memoirs of Duport de Cheverny, of LareVellie"re-Lepeaux, of Lafayette, of Mme. de Chastenay, and of Pasquier, the works of Roederer, the rary journals and reviews. Also, E. and I. de Goncourt: Histoire de la Socie*t6 Francaise pendant le Directoire. Stenger: La Socle"t6 Francaise pendant le Consulat. Rocquain: L'fitat de la France au 18 Brumaire. studies of Aulard, the eontempo-